

Chapter XLV

Kakasaheb's Doubt and Anandrao's Vision - Wooden Plank Baba's bed-stead and not Bhagat's.

Preliminary

We have described in the last three chapters Baba's Passing away. His physical or finite form has no doubt disappeared from our view; but the infinite or spiritual form (Spirit of Baba) ever lives. The Leelas which occurred during His lifetime have been dwelt upon at great length up till now. Ever since His passing away, fresh Leelas have taken place and are even now happening. This clearly shows that Baba is ever-living and helping His devotees as before. The people who got the contact of Baba when He was living, were indeed very fortunate, but if any of them did not get a dispassion for the things and enjoyments of the world and had not their minds turned to the Lord, it was sheerly their ill-luck. What was then wanted and is now wanted is the whole-hearted devotion to Baba. All our senses, organs, and mind should co-operate in worshipping and serving Baba. It is no use in engaging some organs in the worship and deflecting others. If a thing like worhsip or meditation is to be done, it ought to be done with all our mind and soul.

The love that a chaste woman bears to her husband is sometimes compared to that which a disciple bears to his master (Guru). Yet the former falls far short of the latter, which is incomparable. No one, whether he be father, mother, brother or any other relation, comes to our aid in attaining the goal of life (self-realization). We have to chalk out and traverse the path of self-realization ourselves. We have to discriminate between the Unreal and the Real, renounce the things and enjoyments of this world and the next, control our senses and mind, and aspire for liberation only. Instead of depending upon others, we should have full faith in ourselves. When we begin to practice discrimination, we come to know, that the world is transient and unreal and our passion for worldly things becomes less and less, and ultimately we get dispassion or non-attachment for them. Then we know that the Brahma which is no other than our Guru is the sole reality and as It transcends and besets the seeming universe, we begin to worship It in all creatures. This is the unitive Bhajan or worship. When we thus worship the Brahma or Guru whole-heartedly, we become one with Him and attain self-realization. In short, always chanting the name of the Guru, and meditating on Him enables us to see Him in all beings, and confers eternal bliss on us. The following story will illustrate this.

Kakasaheb's Doubt and Anandrao's Vision

It is well-known, that Sai Baba had enjoined Kakasaheb Dixit to read daily two works of Shri Ekanath: (1) Bhagawat and (2) Bhawartha Ramayan. Kakasaheb read these daily while Baba was living and he followed the practice even after Baba's passing away. Once in Kaka Mahajani's house in Choupati, Bombay, Kakasaheb was reading Ekanathi Bhagawat in the morning. Madhavarao Deshpande alias Shama and Kaka Mahajani were then present and listened attentively to the portion read, viz., the 2nd Chapter, 11th skandha of the book. Therein the nine Nathas or Siddhas of the Rishabha family, viz., Kavi, Hari, Antariksha, Prabuddha, Pippalayan, Avirhotra, Drumil, Chamas and Karabhajan expounded the principles of the Bhagawat Dharma to King Janak. The latter asked all the nine Nathas most important questions and each of them answered them satisfactorily. The first, i.e., Kavi explained what is Bhagawat Dharma; Hari, the characteristics of a Bhakta (devotee); Antariksha, what is Maya; Prabuddha, how to cross Maya; Pippalayan, what is Para-Brahma; Avirhotra, what is Karma; Drumil, the incarnations of God and their deeds; Chamas, how a non-devotee fares after death; Karabhajan, the different modes of worship of God in different ages. The substance of all the exposition was that in this Kali age, the only means of liberation was the remembrance of Hari's (Lord's) or Guru's feet. After the reading was over, Kakasaheb said in a despondent tone to Madhavarao and others - "How wonderful is the discourse of the nine Nathas on

Bhakti or devotion. But at the same time how difficult it is to put it into practice! The Nathas were perfect, but is it possible for fools like us to attain the devotion as delineated by them? we won't get it even after several births, then how are we to get salvation? It seems that there is no hope for us." Madhavarao did not like this pessimistic attitude of Kakasaheb. He said - "It is a pity that one who by his good luck got such a jewel (Guru) as Baba, should cry out so disparagingly; If he has unwavering faith in Baba, why should he feel restless? The Bhakti of the Nathas may be strong and wonderful, but is not ours' loving and affectionate? And has not Baba told us authoritatively that remembering and chanting Hari's and Guru's name confers salvation? Then where is the cause for fear and anxiety? Kakasaheb was not satisfied with Madhavarao's explanation. He continued to be anxious and restless, the whole day, thinking and brooding over how to get the powerful Bhakti of the Nathas. Next morning, the following miracle took place.

One gentleman, named Anandrao Pakhade came there in search of Madhavarao. The reading of the Bhagawat was then going on. Mr.Pakhade sat near Madhavarao and was whispering something to him. He was mentioning in low tone his dream-vision. As there was some interruption in the reading by this whispering, Kakasaheb stopped the reading, and asked Madhavarao what the matter was. The latter said - "Yesterday you expressed your doubt, now here is the explanation of it; hear Mr.Pakhade's vision which Baba gave him, explaining the characteristic of 'saving' devotion and showing that the devotion in the form of bow to, or worship of, Guru's feet is sufficient." All were anxious to hear the vision specially Kakasaheb. At their suggestion Mr.Pakhade began to relate the vision as follows.

I was standing in a deep sea in waist-deep water. There I saw Sai Baba all of a sudden. He was sitting on a beautiful throne studded with diamonds, with His Feet in water. I was most pleased and satisfied with the Form of Baba. The vision was so realistic that I never thought that it was a dream. Curiously enough Madhavarao was also standing there. He said to me feelingly - 'Anandrao, fall at Baba's Feet.' I rejoined - "I also wish to do so, but His Feet are in water, how can I place my head on them? I am helpless." Hearing this he said to Baba - "Oh Deva, take out Your Feet which are under water." Then Baba immediately took out His feet. I caught them without delay and bowed to them. On seeing this Baba blessed me saying - Go now, you will attain your welfare, there is no cause for fear and anxiety. He also added - "Give a silk-bordered dhotar to my Shama, you will profit, thereby."

In compliance with Baba's order, Mr.Pakhade brought the dhotar and requested Kakasaheb to hand it over to Madhavarao; but the latter refused to accept it, saying that unless Baba gave a hint or suggestion for acceptance, he would not accept it. Then after some discussion Kakasaheb decided to cast lots. It was the invariable practice of Kakasaheb to cast lots in all dubious matters and to abide by the decision as shown by the picked up chit or lot. In this particular case two chits, on one of which was written 'To accept' and on another 'To reject', were placed at the feet of Baba's picture and an infant was asked to pick one of them. The 'To accept' chit was picked up and the dhotar was handed over to, and accepted by, Madhavarao. In this way both Anandrao and Madhavarao were satisfied and Kakasaheb's difficulty was solved.

This story exhorts us to give respect to the words of other saints, but at the same time asks us to have full faith in our Mother, i.e., the Guru, and abide by His instructions: for he knows our welfare better than any other person. Carve out on your heart, the following words of Baba - "There are innumerable saints in this world, but 'Our father' (Guru) is the Father (Real Guru). Others might say many good things, but we should never forget our Guru's words. In short, love your Guru wholeheartedly, surrender to Him completely and prostrate yourselves before Him reverentially and then you will see that there is no sea of the mundane existence before you to cross, there is no darkness before the sun."

Wooden plank Baba's Bed-Stead, and not Bhagat's

In His earlier days, Baba slept on a wooden plank, 4 arms in length and only a span in breadth with panatis (earthen lamps) burning at the four corners. Later on He broke the plank into pieces and threw it away (Vide Chapter X). Once Baba was describing the greatness or importance of this plank to Kakasaheb. Hearing this the latter said to Baba - "If You still love the wooden plank, I will again suspend or hang up one in the Masjid again for You to sleep at ease." Baba replied - "I won't like to sleep up, leaving Mhalasapati down on the ground." Then Kakasaheb said - "I will provide another plank for Mhalasapati." Baba - "How can he sleep on the plank? It is not easy to sleep up on the plank. He who has many good qualities in him can do so. He who can sleep 'with his eyes wide open' can effect that. When I go to sleep I ask often Mhalasapati to sit by My side, place his hand on My heart and watch the 'chanting of the Lord's name' there, and if he finds Me sleepy, wake Me up. He can't do even this. He himself gets drowsy and begins to nod his head. When I feel his hand heavy as a stone on My heart and cry out - 'Oh Bhagat', he moves and opens his eyes. How can he, who can't sit and sleep well on the ground and whose asana (posture) is not steady and who is a slave to sleep, sleep high up on a plank? On many other occasions Baba said, out of love for His devotees - "What (whether good or bad) is ours, is with us, and what is another's is with him."

Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all